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ABSTRACT

This nine-week unit on the Middle East for sixth graders was developed as part of a series by the Public Education Religion Studies Center at Wright State University. A major objective is to help students understand and appreciate sacred times and sacred places within this cultural setting. They learn how beliefs and practices cause the people to manifest a certain behavior or life style. The unit traces the early development of Western civilization in the Middle East and describes how the geography, history, and religion of the area influence the Middle Eastern culture. Students examine the economic development in Saudi Arabia, Iraq Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, and Egypt. They study how economic security can be attained through the development of natural resources, particularly oil, and the effect this has upon international power. Vocabulary, generalizations, and subject matter are outlined. Nine cognitive objectives each with several sub-points are given. For each objective there are corresponding suggestions for evaluation. Three affective objectives are listed, and references for both teacher and student are provided. (Author/BC)

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UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST

prepared for
Sixth Grade Social Studies

by
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Dayton, Ohio

for the
Teacher Education Institute on
the Religious Dimension of World Cultures
1976-77

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UNDERSTANDING
THE MIDDLE EAST

I. INTRODUCTION

The Middle East includes the countries of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Turkey and Egypt. Since our own country is greatly dependent upon this area for the maintenance of our economic system through the use of its oil and since many of our problems in foreign affairs are centered in this location, it becomes necessary for students today to understand the geographical, historical, cultural and religious implications which are raised when there is any involvement of our country in this area.

One purpose of this unit is to trace the early development of Western civilization that began in the area of the fertile crescent and to show that we are indebted to the early inhabitants for great ideas of law, religion, technology and trade.

Another purpose of this unit is to show that the geographical location influenced the historical development since it was in a strategic location for land travel as well as water travel (Mediterranean). The control of this area was much sought after by many countries because of its importance as a trade route.

Although the economic development in the past has relied heavily on outside capital, these countries have now reached a stage of economic security through development of their natural resources, particularly oil, to the point of holding significant power in international affairs as well as domestic affairs.

In addition to Christianity, which is studied in other units, two other living religions have their origin in this area. The Hebrews believed the idea of one God was revealed to them. Their religion became known as Judaism. In the seventh century AD the prophet Muhammad began his teachings to the Arabs in Saudi Arabia, and the Arabs achieved political unity and inspiration through his teachings. These two religions and the mythology of the ancient Babylonians will be taught in this unit.

The culture of the people in this area is deeply interwoven in their religion, and by these studies we will attempt to give students an understanding and appreciation of sacred times and sacred places within this cultural setting. By the study about the religions in a culture we will attempt to show that the beliefs and practices of the people help to create for them a world view which causes them to manifest a certain behavior or life style (ethos).

This study will be introduced into the curriculum after the students have completed the study of Egypt, both ancient and modern. This unit is proposed for sixth graders and will take approximately nine weeks.

II. CONTENT

A. Generalizations stressed in this study:

*1. The affairs of human societies have historical antecedents and consequences; events of the past influence those of the present.
*2. The global location of a nation or region contributes to its importance in international affairs.

*From: The Ways of Man, by Macmillan Publishing Company, N.Y., 1974.

*3. Changes may result from contacts with other societies and cultures.
*4. Resources and resource use are related to the level of cultural and technological development.
*5. Every known society has some kind of authority structure that serves as its government. Such governments have power to enforce policies or laws about how groups of people should live together.
*6. Every society develops a system of norms, roles, values and sanctions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups within a society.
*7. Status and prestige are relative to the values sought by a social group.
*8. Each culture has certain significant values and beliefs that influence its growth and development.
*9. Concepts dealing with ethics and aesthetics such as good, bad, beautiful, justice, responsibility, morality, rights of people and freedom are concerns of people and are defined differently by different cultures.
*10. Every human cultural system is logical and coherent in its own terms given the basic assumptions and knowledge available to the particular community.
11. Religion gives to a people an orientation to the world in which they live (world view).
12. Religion determines the life style (ethos) of people in a culture.
13. Mythology attempts to explain what is necessary to explain at a given time and place to a given people.
14. Since religion seems to be a factor in decision-making in both domestic and foreign affairs of a country, it now seems imperative that we become familiar with the religions of people of different cultures of the world.

B.

Concepts: New	Concepts: Reinforced
1. Cosmopolitan	1. World view
2. Clan	2. Tradition
3. Pastoral nomadism	3. Ritual
4. Standard of living	4. Ceremony
5. Subsistence	5. Celebration
6. Subsistence agriculture	6. Culture
7. Tribe	7. Life-style
8. Ethics	8. Religion

C. Vocabulary:

1. A.H.	16. Ishtar	32. Kibbutz
2. B.C.E.	17. Anshar	33. Dome of the Rock
3. Ritual	18. Enlil	34. Wailing Wall
4. Symbols	19. Hebrews	35. Muslims
5. Near East-Middle East	20. Jews	36. Allah
6. Disciples	21. Rabbi	37. Koran
7. Cuneiform	22. Torah	38. Kaabah
8. Mesopotamia	23. Talmud	39. Caliph
9. Sumerian	24. Bible	40. Hadith
10. Extended family	25. Exodus	41. Ramadan
11. Akitu	26. Synagogue	42. Umrah
12. Ea	27. Holocaust	43. Ihram
13. Apsu	28. Hanukkah	44. Hijra
14. Marduk	29. Passover	45. Mosque
15. Tiamat	30. Rosh Hashanah	46. Minaret
	31. Yom Kippur	47. Bedouins

*From: The Ways of Man, by Macmillan Publishing Company, N.Y., 1974.

D. Outline of content:

1. Geographical location
   a. Location in relation to Asia, Europe and Africa
   b. Reason for name "Middle East"
   c. Trade route location for both land and water
   d. Location in relation to conflict in the struggle to possess the land
   e. Climate and its effect on way people live
2. The ancient Middle East
   a. Development of civilizations in Mesopotamia
   b. Sumerian civilization
   c. Other civilizations to develop: Babylonian, Persian, Phoenician, Palestinian and Assyrian
   d. Contributions: area of law, technology, writing, astronomy, trade and religions
3. Babylonian mythology
   a. Myth of Creation
   b. Gods of the ancient people
   c. Akitu Festival
   d. Festival of Fates
   e. Sacred Temple and Ishtar's Gate
4. Israel and the Jewish faith
   a. Concept of time, B.C.E.
   b. Jewish people in the land
      1) From Abraham to Moses
      2) The period of the monarchy, 1000-587 B.C.E.
      3) The Exodus
      4) The Creation story
      5) The Diaspora
      6) Israel today
   c. Basic teachings of the Jewish faith
      1) The Torah and Talmud
      2) Festivals and holidays
5. Arab world of Muhammad's day
   a. Bedouin domination of the region of Arabia
   b. Nomadic organization of the family clan
   c. Mecca, center of pagan worship
6. Principles and practices of Islam
   a. Muhammad's religious experience
   b. The Hijra 622 A.D.
   c. The Koran
   d. Five Pillars of Islam
   e. The ritual of the pilgrimmage to Mecca
   f. The Muslim idea of time-A.H.
7. The age of Islamic civilization to 1258 A.D.
   a. Capture: area from western India to Spain
   b. Golden Age of Islam civilization
   c. Progress in chemistry, astronomy, geometry and mathematics
   d. Change from Islamic political influence to religious and cultural influence
8. Middle East today
   a. Bedouin structure of culture and social life
   b. Village life
   c. City life
   d. Rise in standard of living
   e. Economic development
   f. Commercial development
   g. Governmental activities

9. Cultural and religious issues today:
   a. Prayers on the Temple Mount adjoining the Al-Aqsa Mosque
   b. Land on the West Bank of the Jordan River-Abraham's Tomb
   c. Jewish settlement on Arab land in Galilee
   d. Communist mayor of Nazareth
   e. "Good fence policy"
   f. Ongoing negotiations for a peace settlement

III. OBJECTIVES

Cognitive Objectives:

A. Geographical
   The student will be able to:
   1. name the countries of the Middle East, label them on a map showing the location in relation to Europe, Asia and Africa and tell by the location why this area is called the Middle East, why it became an important trade route, why it was influenced by Eastern and Western culture and why the location gave rise to a struggle to possess the land.
   2. locate and describe various types of climate in the Middle East and tell how locations influence climate of this region.

B. Assyrian-Babylonian mythology
   The student will be able to:
   1. tell the creation story of the people of the time and place.
   2. describe the New Year celebration.
   3. describe the Festival of Fates.
   4. list the main gods of the Babylonians and describe their duties.

C. Ancient Middle East
   The student will be able to:
   1. locate the area where civilization began and tell why it began there.
   2. identify the civilizations that flourished in this area.
   3. list the contributions of these civilizations to the world and tell how they are related to Western Civilization.

D. Israel and the Jewish religion
   The student will be able to:
   1. given a list of data regarding the history of the Jews, the student will be able to arrange in chronological order significant persons and events from Abraham to 1947.
   2. list the basic teachings of Judaism.
   3. describe the reasons for four special observances of the Jewish people: Hanukkah, Passover, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
   4. describe the development of Israel since 1947.
   5. explain the significance of the Torah and Talmud.

E. The Arab world in Muhammad's day
   The student will be able to:
   1. describe the basic social structure of the Bedouins.
   2. give facts relating to Muhammad's life.
   3. write in chronological sequence the events that took place from Ishmael to the hijra.

F. Principles and practices of Muslims
The student will be able to:
1. list and describe the Five Pillars of Islam.
2. describe the ritual of the Kaabah.
3. name the holy book and give the symbol of the Muslims.
4. name four actions forbidden to Muslims.

G. Great age of Islamic civilization to 1250 A.D.
The student will be able to:
1. locate on the map the area conquered by the Muslims.
2. explain how the Muslim religion and Arabic language kept this civilization alive even though it was a cosmopolitan area.
3. explain how the teachings of the Koran influences the Muslims to make great strides in preserving and advancing knowledge of science, technology, literature and art.

H. Middle East today
The student will be able to:
1. categorize the characteristics of each population group as to their laws, education, standard of living, culture, commerce and government.
2. explain the Western world's interest in the Middle East.

I. Cultural and religious issues today
The student will be able to:
1. tell why there was a dispute over prayers on the Temple Mount.
2. tell why the land on the West Bank of the Jordan River is sacred to both Jews and Muslims.
3. discuss the religious reasons for disputes over Jewish settlements in Galilee.
4. describe the events of the "good fence policy."
5. summarize current efforts to bring about a peace settlement.

Affective Objectives:

After having studied this unit the student should be able to:
A. discuss the actions of people from the Middle East, or other cultures different from our own, without manifesting ridicule.
B. appreciate the diversity of world views and life styles in cultures different from their own.
C. exhibit a sense of pride and conviction in his/her own values, world view and life-style.
D. develop insight into how tradition plays a role in his/her decision-making.

IV. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

A. Pre-assessment:
1. Since many students are familiar with our involvement in the Middle East because of the oil crises, have each student write a paragraph telling his or her impressions of what the people of these countries are like. Suggest that they write about their clothing, food, shelter, skin color, how they earn a living and what religious activities they may practice. It is always interesting as well as valuable to note the stereotypes of people from different cultures. Save these papers and use this same question in the post-assessment.

B. Initiatory Activities:
1. See a movie "The Middle East: Crossroads of Three Continents" or "The Middle East" to create interest.
2. Draw a map of the Middle East using as a model the map on pages 92 and 93 in Macmillan, The Ways of Man, copyright 1974, or any map which clearly shows this area in relation to the surrounding continents. Label each country and outline it using black crayon or felt pen. Color the map to show land forms as shown on pages 92 and 93.
3. Begin a collection of news articles from daily papers and current magazines about the Middle East. Make a scrapbook to save the collection. This will be an ongoing activity.

C. Developmental Activities:
1. Read material listed in the bibliography.
2. Make a cylinder seal out of soap, clay or styrofoam.
3. Make a poster showing religious symbols.
4. Make a time line showing events in this area from 3000 B.C. to 1976.
5. Make a clay tablet showing cuneiform writing. Use the pictures in your books. (These show samples.)
6. Have students set up a bazaar and act out the barter system.
7. Do graphic relief to show Babylonian art--you may use paper mache on cardboard.
8. Do research regarding the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.
9. Write a report on Hammurabi and his code.
10. Read Bible stories of Abraham, Joseph and Moses to show the history of the Jewish people from Abraham through the Exodus and the giving of the Ten Commandments.
11. Write a report on the Jewish Holocaust of World War II.
12. Make a mural tracing the story of the Jews from Abraham to the present.
13. Find pictures and information and decorate a bulletin board.
14. Draw a map of the Muslim Empire and trace the hijra.
15. Read portions of the Koran.
16. Write a report on the ritual at the Kaabah.
17. Draw pictures showing Muslim architecture.
18. Make a scrapbook of Judaism and Islam.
19. Using the World Almanac, make a chart showing the number of people in the world who belong to these two faiths.
20. As a large group activity, construct a replica of Ishtar's Gate and walls of Babylon.
21. Listen to the following tapes: "Jerusalem City Family," "World Religions," "Abba Eban: A Hope for Peace." (Available at Dayton Montgomery County Public Library)
22. Listen to the tape, "Life and Times in the Arab World" and "Life and Times in Ancient Mesopotamia"--available through Troll Cassettes.
23. Listen to "Scheherazade Suite" by Rimsky-Korsakov.
24. Read the stories from 1001 Nights, stories of Arabia.
25. Read and report on any book from the book list.

D. Culminating Activities:
1. Field trips to the following places:
   a. Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 19, 1612 West 5th Street, Dayton, Ohio
   b. Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, 637 Randolph Street, Dayton, Ohio
   c. Temple Israel, 1831 Emerson Avenue, Dayton, Ohio
   d. Beth Jacob Synagogue, 1350 Kumler Avenue, Dayton, Ohio
   e. Art Institute, 405 W. Riverview Avenue, Dayton, Ohio
2. Speakers
   a. Ahmadiyya Movement Islam--call Iasha Shaheed, 263-7491, after 4 p.m.
   b. Rika Zimmerman, Jewish Community Council

3. Have a display of all work done, perhaps in the form of a bazaar.
4. Include the display as part of an International Festival as we do at Rushmore School every year in March.
5. Give the same test as you gave as a pre-test and note differences in knowledge and attitudes.

V. EVALUATION

A. Geographical
1. Given a map the student will be able to identify and label each country of the Middle East, label the water boundaries and surrounding land areas.
2. They should also be able to label the site of Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina and the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
3. Climate factors could be tested by short essay answer.

B. Babylonian mythology
1. For objectives 1, 2 and 3, I would use essay questions.
2. For objective 4, I would use a matching exercise.

C. Ancient Middle East
1. Given a map the student should be able to label the areas by their ancient names: Mesopotamia, Persia, Palestine, Assyria and Babylonia.
2. To identify the civilizations and list contributions one could give short answers quiz.

D. Israel and Jewish religion
1. Jewish history data in sequence would be an open book completion of assignment of this objective.
2. Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5 could be tested by a multiple choice test.

E. The Arab world in Muhammad's day
1. To test the social structure, I would give a vocabulary test on the following words: Bedouin, extended family, Caliph, clan, pastoral, nomadism and subsistence.
2. To evaluate the life of Muhammad, I would expect a completed assignment.

F. Principles and practices of Muslim
1. I would use short answer completion to evaluate objective 1.
2. Essay on ritual of the Kaabah.
3. Multiple choice for holy book and symbols and for actions that Muslims are forbidden to do.

G. Great age of Islamic civilization
1. Color in on a map the area controlled by Muslims.
2. For objectives 2 and 3, I would have a written test with true, false, completion short answer, multiple choice, matching and essay. There is ample information in the book to warrant this.

H. Middle East today
For objective 1, I would have the students see if they could classify information without using the textbook. Given a list of characteristics, have them make a chart. In their activity they performed plays and had a discussion to meet this objective.

I. Cultural and religious issues today
I would use essay questions.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

A. Teacher's bibliography

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D. Filmstrips

(Available Wright State University)

Time-Life Series. "The World's Great Religions"

E. Films

(The following films are available at the Dayton-Montgomery County Library)

"Ancient Persia"
"Holy Land"
"Israel"
"Jerusalem, the Holy City"
"Judaism"
"Middle East"
"This Is Israel"
"Wilderness of Zin"